

Item 6, HWBB meeting 12 October 2018, Cover note

Your experiences as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people accessing Health & Social Care Services in Reading is a report produced jointly by Healthwatch Reading and local LGBT+ charity, Support U and was published in September 2018.

National reports state that people identifying as LGBT+, experience significant health inequalities. Healthwatch Reading sought to shed light on the experience of Reading people identifying as LGBT+, and to work in partnership with a local charity that has the networks and lived experience of this group of people.

The report includes findings of an online survey answered by 35 people:

- Just over one-third were not 'out' to their GP about their sexual orientation
- **11 out of 35 (31%) had experienced anxiety and 13 (37%) had sought help for depression**, much higher rates than the general population
- Nobody felt they had been discriminated against by a health professional due to their sexuality, but **17% reported some prejudice**, and others felt health professionals showed a lack of knowledge or respect (see comments below). This echoes a government 2017 survey finding: **16% of 108,000 LGBT+ people said they experienced prejudice from health professionals**

'[When I went for a] regular abdominal scan related to gender transition - operator did not read my medical record and assumed I was cisgender male there for prostate scan.'

'Being asked continually about pregnancy tests when I have a female partner, am female-bodied and have stated multiple times that I will not be conceiving and there is no chance of being pregnant gets very tiring very quickly!'

Respondents' main suggestion for change was better training for professionals:

'Some people are very good or at least act professionally, while others are completely ignorant and/or have no idea how to behave, but I have no way of knowing how they will react or what assumptions they will make until I am actually talking to them.'

Healthwatch Reading urges local organisations to use a Stonewall toolkit on building an LGBT-inclusive service, and to also engage with Support U about potential local staff training opportunities.

We hope our report is the start of a wider discussion with local organisations and their equality leads, about how they might adopt our recommendations and to also understand how, or if, they are implementing 'EDS2', the NHS Equality Delivery System programme that aims to help them meet their Public Sector Equality Duty.